



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

Rachel K. Paulose, United States Attorney

David Anderson, Public Affairs Specialist
(612) 664-5684; cell: (612) 730-2251

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, Dec. 14, 2007

Eleven pleaded guilty in marijuana distribution ring

Federal prosecutors made a dent in a Twin Cities marijuana distribution ring after the last of 11 people pleaded guilty yesterday to conspiracy to distribute marijuana. Michael Thomas Orszulak, 27, Minneapolis, entered his plea before U.S. District Judge David S. Doty Dec. 13.

Each of the defendants pleaded guilty to distributing marijuana including: Timothy Tou Thammavongsa, 30, Minneapolis; Ashley Alaina Wermager, 24, unknown address; Tini Suy, 33, Brooklyn Park; Gabriel Jesse Rodriguez, 32, Minneapolis; Timothy Daniel Meyer, 27, Rochester; Ryan Elliot McManimon, 28, St. Paul; John Oliver Kasal, 29, St. Paul; Scott Vaughn Favre, 29, unknown address; Patrick John Addy, 29, Eden Prairie; and Tanya Mae Wheeler, 26, unknown address.

According to the plea agreements, each defendant was involved in the conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute approximately 100 or more kilograms of marijuana. The agreements state that beginning on Aug. 1, 2005, Thammavongsa and Orszulak agreed to obtain large quantities of marijuana to sell in Minnesota.

The agreements allege that Thammavongsa obtained shipments of high-grade marijuana, commonly known as BC Bud, and provided quantities of it to Orszulak for distribution. Orszulak would provide the marijuana to various distributors, collect money from the sales, pay Thammavongsa, and retain some profit.

Thammavongsa and Orszulak attempted to insulate themselves from personal exposure by using third persons, commonly known as runners, to deliver the marijuana and money.

The 11 defendants each face a potential maximum penalty of 40 years in prison and a \$2 million fine. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge. This case is the result of an investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Southwest Hennepin Drug Task Force and the police departments of Eden Prairie, Minneapolis, Brooklyn Park and Rochester. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Steven L. Schleicher.